

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
**INFORMATION REPORT**

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.  
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1. Up to the middle of 1951, the methods used at the StB station on Bartolomejska ulice, Prague II, included physical maltreatment; that is, beatings, confinement in the dark, and inducement of hunger and thirst. These methods were drastic, but on the whole not very effective, since even the least brave managed to keep silent on the most important points. Later in 1951 these methods were abandoned and the Western technique of conviction on the basis of proved guilt came into use. Political and psychological pressure was brought to bear.
2. The course of interrogation is roughly as follows: A member of the StB, who is addressed as "Pan referent" (reporter), introduces himself to the person under interrogation. Before the actual interrogation, there is a general discussion of that person's family and personal relations. In due course, by imperceptible steps, the political reasons for the criminal act committed by the subject under interrogation are approached. This discussion is concluded on a political note, intended to show that the criminal act committed must be punished. The member of the StB reassures the prisoner by telling him that the punishment will not be severe. The interrogation lasts a whole morning, and at the end the interrogator says: "I shall call you this afternoon, and you can think over some of the questions in which I am interested." With this he puts a few questions to him directly touching on the offense. At the afternoon interrogation, the accused can say what he likes. The record of it is not directed towards any particular end and is only in notes made by the interrogator. It is really a trap set by the StB to ascertain whether the person is speaking the truth, since the StB already has accurate answers to the questions or has at least investigated them by other means. At the end of this interrogation, which brings out the person's own story, the official tells him he may go and that he will be called again. He goes back to his cell with mixed feelings not knowing what to think.

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3. The second interrogation generally takes place 10 days later, and the prisoner goes to it in a depressed state of mind. At this hearing there is again a general discussion of the offense, and its criminal character is emphasized. The actual nature of the offense is again approached indirectly. The StB officer now exploits contradictions in the preceding interrogation and begins to press the prisoner. If he denies the accusations, the StB officer breaks off the interrogation and sends him back to his cell. If the prisoner tells the whole or part of the story expected, he is left in the charge of the same official who has conducted all the interrogations until the end. The number of interrogations depends on the gravity of the offense. In an average case there are 10-15 interrogations over a period of 6-10 weeks. Formerly, interrogations took 6-8 months. If the person confesses in part or in full, an entry about extenuating circumstances is made at the end of the record and this will produce a reduced sentence at his trial. At the end of the preliminary interrogations, during which the official has only made notes, a typewritten record is drawn up which the accused must sign on every page. He is allowed to read it, and when he is committed for trial, this record goes into court.
4. If the accused persists in denials, a different official conducts each interrogation. The purpose of this is to find one who can win the prisoner's confidence. Usually the official is changed five or six times, and if this method does not succeed, the last one resorts to force. Before applying force, the official warns the accused that he is obliged to use this method to obtain a confession and that he has a last opportunity to speak the truth. Otherwise he will have lost the chance of pleading extenuating circumstances. If he still refuses to tell the truth, the official announces that he will not wait for a confession, but will write a record himself, upon which the accused will be sentenced to 20 years.
5. In resorting to forcible methods, the subject is first made to squat 100-150 times and do 50 kneebends and other simple exercises to tire him out. Mental pressure is brought to bear on him by telling him, before he is returned to his cell, that at the next interrogation he will see some member of his family (wife, mother, or father) being interrogated about his case. Some pretext can always be found for sentencing a relative as well. In this state of mind, he is left in his cell for several days. If he still denies everything at the next interrogation, when a member of his family is really brought to confront him, he is led away immediately, and the so-called "standing method" is adopted. This means that for several days and nights the prisoner must stand at attention in one spot under constant observation of a guard. Usually he collapses in two days, his legs swell up and the swollen veins cause him terrible pain. After this the man usually confesses. It is, however, not very often used. In most cases, the official writes the record himself, according to his own opinion of the prisoner's crime. The sentence is then disproportionately heavy. The prisoner does not sign this statement.
6. If the interrogation is satisfactory, the prisoner is allowed to smoke, buy things, and receive letters from his family. During the interrogation he is allowed to smoke as much as he likes, the official supplying the cigarettes, and he is given snacks. The interrogations are carried on in a friendly manner, and the subject is advised how to conduct himself after his sentence to obtain a conditional release or pardon. It is explained to him that his sentence, whatever it may be, is intended as a warning, and that his release depends entirely on himself. The official lays the greatest emphasis on good conduct and output of work. He hints that an amnesty is expected, and that he must not take the 15 or 20 years to which he would be condemned at face value. The following disadvantages attach to failure to confess: the prisoner is not allowed to smoke, buy anything, or receive any letters, and he spends most of his time in solitary confinement. Persuasion and threats succeed one another and he suffers mental torture worse than any physical ordeal.

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## 7. General conditions of imprisonment during interrogations:

- a) Up to 1951, the prisoner was allowed to move freely in his cell and was not bound by any regulations. When taken out for interrogations, he walked quite free beside the guard. He wore the clothes in which he had been arrested, could have clean linen sent from outside every 14 days, and could receive parcels of food.
- b) Since 1951, however, everyone under interrogation has been made to change into green, canvas, prison garb, and has been issued linen by the StB. A prisoner is given opaque spectacles when being led to his cell. He reports by the number he is assigned on arrival. Everything in the cell belongs to the StB, and all privileges are only by permission of the interrogating official. The prisoner has to put on the opaque glasses immediately on leaving his cell for interrogations, and they are only taken off when he reaches the interrogation office.
- c) In the cell, he is under constant observation; meals are passed through the little opening in the door, so that he does not even see his guard's face. It is forbidden to ask the guards any questions.
- d) Medical attention is allowed only in the most urgent cases, such as treatment after the "standing method" or for wounds received in the course of arrest. Drugs for toothache or headache are passed through the window in the door.
- e) Furniture in the cell, tables, chairs, and beds, all seem to be of the folding type, fixed to the walls. The cell walls are quite smooth, the window of frosted glass, ventilation limited. The lavatories are flush toilets, for standing only, with no bowls: the so-called Turkish types.
- f) During the whole period of his interrogation, the accused remains in his cell with no time out for exercise. The food is well prepared but the quantity is insufficient, and if the prisoner is not allowed to buy any, he suffers from hunger.
- g) The prisoner has to sleep in a lighted cell, lying flat on his back, arms stretched along his body outside the covers. His face must be turned towards the observation hole in the door and he may not cover it with his hands or the bedclothes.
- h) Where a prisoner has refused to confess, he is wakened several times in the night in order to upset the balance of his mind. In some cases he is given an icy shower several times during the night, going back to bed again afterwards. If he alters the regulation posture while he is asleep, he is immediately wakened and told that he is lying in the wrong position. After a few days, everyone gets accustomed to this way of sleeping, which is quite exhausting.
- i) The interrogating officer tries to make a good impression on the person he is interrogating and attempts to establish human and personal contact with him, even doing with him the exercises he is told to do to convince him that he is not being asked to do the impossible. The interrogator will even squat with the prisoner 300 times. In most cases the interrogator is chosen to suit the man being interrogated.

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